

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-10 AID-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /067 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3033

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 6731

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: LUDER AND ROBLEDO VISIT MRS. PERON

REF: BA 6699

1. IN A SURPRISE MOVE OCTOBER 7, INTERIOR MINISTER ROBLEDO, FOLLOWED SEVERAL HOURS LATER BY INTERIM PRESIDENT LUDER, CALLED ON MRS. PERON AT HER REATREAT AT ASCOCHINGA, CORDOBA PROVINCE. SUDDENNESS OF TRIP FOR BOTH MEN CAUGHT EVEN THEIR SENIOR AIDES BY SURPRISE AND BOTH PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE AND INTERIOR UNDERSECRETARY NOT AWARE THE TWO HAD LEFT TOWN UNTIL SEVERAL HOURS AFTER THEIR DEPARTURE.

2. BOTH RETURNED TO BUENOS AIRES EVENING OCTOBER 7 AND IN OFFICIAL STATEMENT SAID THEY HAD HAD EXTENDED "TEA" WITH MRS. PERON. DESPITE INSISTENT QUESTIONING BY REPORTERS, PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY REFUSED TO GIVE OUT ANY SUBSTANTIVE DETAILS CONCERNING CONVERSATIONS THREE HELD IN ASCOCHINGA. WHILE POLITICAL OBSERVERS EAGERLY AWAIT SOME INDICATION THAT CONVERSATIONS YESTERDAY DECIDED QUESTION OF MRS. PERON'S RETURN, PRESS COMMENTARY AND EMBASSY CONTACTS ALL INDICATE FURTHER HARDENING OF OPINION AGAINST MRS. PERON'S REASSUMING POWER.

3. PRESS AND EMBASSY SOURCES REPORT THAT ROBLEDO, HAVING
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DECIDED TO PLAY FOR TIME (SEE REFTTEL), ARRIVED IN ASCOCHINGA

EARLY MORNING OCTOBER 7 AND SPENT SEVERAL HOURS ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE MRS. PERON THAT SHE SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO RESUME PRESIDENCY OCTOBER 17. SHE REPORTEDLY RESISTED THIS OVERTURE, AND AROUND MIDDAY ROBLEDO CALLED LUDER ASKING HIM TO COME IMMEDIATELY TO ASCOCHINGA TO REINFORCE HIS ARGUMENTS THAT SHE SHOULD REMAIN ON LEAVE. NO INFORMATION AS TO RESULTS OF ENSUING THREE-WAY CONVERSATION HAS YET LEAKED TO PRESS OR POLITICAL SOURCES.

4. LA OPINION COLUMNIST HERIBERTO KAHN REPORTS IN FRONT PAGE STORY THAT SENIOR MILITARY OFFICIALS HAVE REACHED CONCLUSION THAT THE COUNTRY CAN NO LONGER AFFORD THE CONTINUED UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHO WILL LEAD ARGENTINA. THE MILITARY NOW WISHES TO MAKE THE SUPPRESSION OF TERRORISM THE NO. 1 ITEM ON THE NATIONAL AGENDA AND IS QUESTIONING THE ABILITY OF A SICK PRESIDENT TO LEAD IN THIS STRUGGLE, KAHN REPORTS. IN A RELATED ARTICLE, LA OPINION REPORTS THAT AIR FORCE COMMANDER FAUTARIO VISITED ASCOCHINGA MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, AND RELAYED TO MRS. PERON MILITARY'S DESIRE THAT SHE PROLONG HER VACATION UNTIL AT LEAST THE END OF 1975.

5. IN POLITICAL CIRCLES, APART FROM VERTICALISTAS, MOST EMBASSY CNTACTS CONVINCED CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM CANNOT LONG SURVIVE MRS. PERON'S REASSUMING POWER AND, THUS, ARE CONCLUDING (PERHAPS WISHFULLY) THAT SHE WILL NOT COME BACK. SENIOR AIDE TO SENATOR DE LA RUA, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, TOLD EMBOFF TODAY (OCTOBER 8) THAT LUDER WAS PREPARED TO TELL MRS. PERON THAT IF SHE ATTEMPTS RETURN TO POWER, THE CHECK SCANDAL INVESTIGATION WILL BE ALLOWED TO GO FORWARD WITH ALL THE EMBARRASSMENT AND LEGAL DIFFICULTIES THIS WILL ENTAIL FOR HER. (NOTE: SENATOR DE LA RUA CHAIRED CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE WHEN IT REQUESTED OFFICIAL EXPLANATION OF CHECK FROM EXECUTIVE AND HAS HAD MANY DEALINGS WITH PERONISTS ON THIS SUBJECT.)

6. COMMENT: WHILE LUDER AND ROBLEDO HAVE NOT YET BROKEN SILENCE AS TO RESULTS OF THEIR CONVERSATION WITH MRS. PERON, EXPECTATION IN POLITICAL CIRCLES IS THAT RESOLUTION OF ISSUE MUST COME BEFORE END OF CURRENT WEEK WITH MOST OBSERVERS NOW EXPECTING HER TO ANNOUNCE FURTHER EXTENSION OF "VACATION" OR
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PERHAPS EVEN ANNOUNCING RESIGNATION.
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